

Message Text

SECRET

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01

SS-14 NSC-10 T-03 EUR-25 AID-20 OMB-01 L-03 RSR-01

/109 W

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R 210915 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3520

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN

USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T JIDDA 1140

SECDEF FOR ISA

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE

SUBJECT: SAUDI PLANS FOR STRENGTHENING YAR MILITARILY

REF: A JIDDA 1061; B. STATE 49923

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR INFORMED PRINCE SULTAN WE THOUGHT
FIRST STEP IN WORKING OUT PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT YAR' S
MILITARY CAPABILITIES SHOULD BE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT
BY SAUDI - YAR OFFICERS AND THAT US ROLE SHOULD BE
KEPT IN BACKGROUND. COUPLE OF USMTM GROUND ADVISERS
WOULD THEN BE DETAILED TO WORK SEPARATELY WITH SAUDI
STUDY TEAM PROVIDE INPUT OF IDEAS AND INDEPENDENT
ASSESSMENT. IN GENERAL SULTAN AGREED AND SAID HE
SENDING LTGEN ALI MAJID KABBANI ON SECRET SURVEY MISSION
TO YAR. AMB REMINDED SULTAN OF HOW ANY YAR EQUIPMENT
ACQUISITIONS FROM US ARE TO BE FINANCED. SULTAN NOTED SAG
SUPPLYING YAR ONE HUNDRED MILLION RIYALS BUDGETARY
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SUPPORT FOR NEXT 16 MONTHS IN ADDITION OTHER FORMS OF AID. END SUMMARY.

1. AT MEETING MARCH 19 WITH PRINCE SULTAN I TOLD HIM WE WERE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT SAG INTENDING CAREFUL REVIEW OF YAR' S MILITARY NEEDS WITH VIEW TO DEVELOPING WELL THOUGHT OUT PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT OF YAR' S MILITARY CAPABILITIES OVER NEXT FEW YEARS. WE THOUGHT FIRST STEP SHOULD BE FOR SAUDI AND YAR OFFICERS UNDERTAKE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT AND DRAFTING OF PLAN.

2. TOLD SULTAN USG WISHED BE HELPFUL IN THIS PROCESS BUT ALSO WANTED AVOID CREATING IMPRESSION IN YAR MINDS THAT WE INTENDING ASSUME DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAM. WE THOUGHT IT MOST IMPORTANT RE- EQUIPPING OF YEMEN CONTINUE TO BE MAINLY JOINT SAUDI YAR ENDEAVOR; US ROLE SHOULD BE KEPT WELL IN BACKGROUND, AND I COULD CONCEIVE OF REASONS WHY YEMENIS THEMSELVES MIGHT NOT WANT USG HAND TO SHOW TOO PLAINLY.

3. CONSEQUENTLY I WANTED TO SUGGEST A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT METHOD OF PROCEEDING THAN WE HAD PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED. SAUDI AND YEMENI OFFICERS WOULD WORK ACROSS TABLE FROM EACH OTHER, WORK OUT PLAN FOR YEMEN REQUIREMENTS BUT WITHOUT US ADVISERS BEING PRESENT. COUPLE OF USMTM GROUND ADVISERS WOULD THEN BE DETAILED TO WORK SEPARATELY WITH SAUDI STUDY TEAM, PROVIDE INPUT OF IDEAS FOR STRENGTHENING PLAN, AND PROVIDE ALSO AN INDEPENDENT OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF YEMENI REQUIREMENTS AND PROPOSALS.

4. SULTAN HAD NO OBJECTION THOUGH FELT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO MAKE YEMENIS UNDERSTAND IN SOME FASHION THAT CUTTING DOWN THEIR INFLATED REQUESTS WAS NOT JUST SAG IDEA BUT HAD SUPPORT OF OTHER MILITARY EXPERTS. I SUGGESTED WE WAIT AND OBSERVE YEMENI REACTIONS AND IF SUCH PROBLEM AROSE CONSIDER THEN HOW WE MIGHT DEAL WITH IT.

5. IN RESPONSE MY INQUIRY AS TO NEXT STEPS, SULTAN SAID MEETINGS BETWEEN YEMENIS AND SAUDI OFFICERS MIGHT START IN FEW DAYS. I ASKED IF THERE SHOULD NOT BE FIRST SOME CAREFUL ON THE GROUND STUDY OF YEMENI FORCES. SULTAN REPLIED HE SENDING LTGENERAL AL MAJID KABBANI,
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CHIEF OF OPERATIONS (G-3). ON " SECRET" MISSION TO YAR

TO CONDUCT JUST SUCH SUVEY.

6. AT END OF CONVERSATION THOUGHT IT BEST MAKE SURE THERE NO MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO HOW MILITARY EQUIPMENT INCREMENTS FOR YEMEN ARE TO BE FINANCED. SULTAN TOOK THE POINT BUT MADE SHORT PLEA FOR " DIRECT US ASSISTANCE" IN MARSHALING RESOURCES TO COMBAT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE ALONG SOUTHERN EDGE OF ARABIAN PENINSULA-- EITHER THROUGH GRANTS OR LONG TERM LOANS.

7. SULTAN GAVE ME SOME DETAILS OF ASSISTANCE TO YAR PROMISED AT RECENT MEETINGS WITH YAR PRIME MINISTER IN RIYADH. SAG WILL SUPPLY ONE HUNDRED MILLION RIYALS DIRECT BUDGETARY SUPPORT OVER NEXT SISEEN MONTHS IN ADDITION TO DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AID AND POSTPONEMENT OF REPAYMENT OF SOME OUTSTANDING LOANS.

8. I NOTED US WOULD INDEED BE MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO COMBATTING COMMUNISM IN SOUTH YEMEN IF US MILITARY SALES FACILITIES AND EXPERTISE WERE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON YAR ARMS SUPPLY PROBLEM.

9. SULTAN ASKED I SUPPLY HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE NAMES OF OFFICERS WHO MIGHT CONSULT WITH SAG ON YAR ARMS PLANNING. (EMBASSY WILL DEVELOP THESE IN CONSULTATION WITH USMTM.) SULTAN ALSO ASKED FOR SHORT WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HOW WE WOULD PROPOSE PROCEED WITH REGARD OUR ADVISORY ROLE ON SAG- YAR MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIBERATONS SINCE HE WISHED SHOW THIS TO KING. WE WILL SUPPLY HIM THIS ON LINES OF MY STATEMENTS ABOVE AND GUIDANCE CONTAINED REFTEL A.
THACHER

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